

id: 243607
date: 2010-01-14 13:10:00
refid: 10TASHKENT19
origin: Embassy Tashkent
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination:
header:
VZCZCXRO7958
OO RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHSL
DE RUEHNT #0019/01 0141311
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 TASHKENT 000019

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG
AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO AMCONSUL ALMATY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/14
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, MARR, UZ
SUBJECT: Uzbekistan: GOU Proposals for ABC Follow-on

CLASSIFIED BY: Nicholas Berliner, Pol-Econ Chief; REASON: 1.4(A),
(B), (D)

1. (C) Summary: The Uzbek MFA provided the Embassy with the GOU's proposed follow-on to the Annual Bilateral Consultations (ABC) on January 12. Although there are several differences in their document (particularly in the Human Dimension), it represents a serious response conveyed with the message that, at the highest levels, Tashkent wants to take this process forward. Despite having

deleted several U.S. proposals on human rights issues, the MFA pointed out that such issues could nevertheless be discussed, as they had been in Washington in December. Most importantly, there is a clearly communicated expectation that the ABC process should soon begin to produce tangible results, both in the form of follow through to the GOU's request for "military-technical cooperation" and in the form of a high-level visit. The Uzbek leadership is likely amenable to expanded cooperation on Afghanistan, including measures to support the "plus up" in forces, but is seeking confirmation that the relationship with the U.S. has moved beyond sanctions. End Summary.

2. (C) The Uzbek Foreign Ministry convoked DCM and Pol-Econ Chief on January 12 to share the text of the GOU's formal response to our proposed ABC follow-on agenda. Americas Division Chief Bakhtiyor Ibragimov made a point of noting that the agenda had been approved by President Karimov himself (a point also noted in the diplomatic note conveying the text). He said that the GOU was very happy with the December 17-18 talks in Washington and is eager to move forward across the full range of the agenda. Ibragimov emphasized that Karimov has taken a personal interest in this process and that tangible results will be needed to move from dialogue to action. He noted that there are still skeptics in the Uzbek bureaucracy who will only be convinced by deeds.

3. (C) In spelling out what the GOU would take as evidence of U.S. sincerity, Ibragimov noted that a visit by Secretary Clinton to Tashkent would be taken as a very constructive gesture that could go a long way towards opening up greater cooperation across a range of issues. (Note: This request is the first item in the document the GOU produced - attached at Para 6. There is also a mention of a visit by SRAP Holbrooke to Tashkent, which the GOU appears to expect. End Note.) He also noted the pending request for "military-technical cooperation" and the need to follow through with the visit of the Special Working Group (SWG) to Tashkent in the first quarter of this year to assess the needs and capabilities of Uzbekistan's armed forces. The GOU expects a serious dialogue on this issue and a professional team that can go back with specific recommendations, rather than a promise to "explore the issue further."

4. (C) Overall, the document the GOU produced represents a serious response to our proposals with few surprises. Apart from the predictable inclusion of references to Karimov's "6 plus 3"

proposal for Afghanistan, the most significant GOU changes come in the Human Dimension, where the Uzbeks removed references to religious freedom, child labor and reviewing human rights cases. Ibragimov said that, while the MFA understood that these questions would be discussed, as they were in Washington, it was impossible to agree to their inclusion in a document. (Note: This has been a consistent position on the part of the GOU, reflecting President Karimov's neuralgia at any hint of criticism or "grading" of Uzbekistan. The MFA knows they will not avoid discussions of these issues, but cannot openly contradict Karimov. The fact that FM Norov sent a thank you letter to A/S Posner is an indication of openness to discuss human rights and of the fact that, despite eliminating these references from the initial ABC agenda, Norov did not feel "ambushed" by the fact that such a discussion took place in Washington. End Note.)

5. (C) Comment: Our engagement with Uzbekistan is very quickly

TASHKENT 00000019 002 OF 005

reaching the point where we will have to make some hard decisions. There is a critical need to maintain momentum. We expect that further enhancements to NDN, such as approval to ship armored M-ATV vehicles and refrigerated cargo will be approved without further "signals." However, to sustain this level of cooperation, even as we consider other options to support the Afghanistan "plus up," we will need to be able to respond tangibly to the Uzbeks' request on "military-technical cooperation" and be prepared for the type of high-level engagement they are seeking. We do not believe that closer cooperation on Afghanistan must come at the price of lessening the emphasis we place on human rights. In fact, independent of this, experience on the ground has shown that the only way to move forward with the Uzbeks is through principled engagement. Closer cooperation could produce "forcing events" for progress on human rights and lessen GOU suspicion of U.S. motives, thus allowing the regime to loosen its vise on civil society.

6. (SBU) Text of Uzbek MFA Diplomatic Note on ABC Follow-on:

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

N 20/1016

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America in Tashkent and in reply to the diplomatic note number 2013, dated December 30, 2009, has the honor to inform that, with a view to further development and strengthening of mutually-beneficial Uzbek-American relations, consistent implementation of provisions of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework Between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United States of America signed in 2002, as well as implementation of other bilateral intergovernmental and interagency agreements in political, trade, economic and humanitarian areas, a Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted in January 11, 2010 with an approved 2010 Action Plan on strengthening bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United States of America.

The Uzbek Side positively assesses the results of the First Round of Annual Political Consultations that took place in Washington, DC, on December 17-18, 2009, and notes significant practical importance of proposals made by the American Side on the further development of bilateral relations in political, security, economic, and human dimension areas, as well as in the achievement of peace and stability in Afghanistan, which were considered in the Action Plan. The Ministry hopes to have constructive cooperation of the American Side in joint implementation of the action Plan.

The Ministry avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy the assurances of its highest consideration.

Tashkent, January 12, 2010.

The Embassy Of the United States of America

Tashkent

Action Plan on Strengthening Bilateral Cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United States of America for 2010

TASHKENT 00000019 003 OF 005

I. In the Political Area

- Organization of U.S. Secretary Hillary Clinton's visit to Uzbekistan (first half-year period);
- Organization of the visit to Uzbekistan for a group of U.S. Congressman - members of Central Asia Caucus (first half-year period);
- Uzbekistan's assistance in the organization of participation of U.S. representatives at SCO summit in Tashkent, with the consent of SCO member-states (first half-year period);
- Conduct the Second Round of Uzbek-American Political Consultations in Tashkent in the second half of the year (first half-year period).

II. In the Area of Security

- Visit to Uzbekistan by a Special Working Group of the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Defense assess the requirements of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan in particular types of military equipment and ammunition, and for organization of their supply under the framework of the FMF and EDA programs (first quarter);
- Organization of training and continuing education for Uzbek officers (education sessions and trainings) in leading military-training institutions of the United States, including under the IMET program framework (first half-year period);
- Allotment of a representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Headquarters of U.S. Central Command in Tampa (Florida) in order to increase coordination efficiency of military and military-technical cooperation (first quarter);
- Cooperation in the area of border security and nonproliferation, realization of U.S. technical assistance programs in this area (second half-year period);
- Organization of the visit to Uzbekistan by D. Benjamin, Coordinator of the U.S. Department of State Counterterrorism Office for discussion of bilateral cooperation issues in the area of antiterrorism efforts (first half-year period);

III. In the Area of Economic Development

- Organization of a roundtable on attracting American investments and advanced technologies to the Republic of Uzbekistan, including to the Free Industrial Economic Zone "Navoi" (first half-year period);
- Holding consultations on the completion by the American Side of all internal procedures within USG to ratify the intergovernmental agreement signed in December 1994 on "Encouragement and mutual protection of foreign investment" (first half-year period);
- Assistance in participation of U.S. companies at the meeting of the Council of Governors of Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Tashkent (first half-year period);
- Organization of visit of business representatives of the republic to the U.S. within the framework of SABIT program to familiarize with American experience in such areas as food processing and renewable energy (first half-year period);
- Creation of a Joint Forum for U.S. and Uzbek farmers to exchange know-how on farming practices (second half-year period);
- Increase of U.S. assistance in implementation of projects in Uzbekistan aimed at the modernization of irrigation systems, land

TASHKENT 00000019 004 OF 005

reclamation and restoration of degenerated land, and attracting new technology for improvement of agricultural yields (February);

- Organization of consultations on the matter of cancelling the Jackson-Vanik Amendment in regard to the Republic of Uzbekistan (first half-year period);
- Holding the next meeting of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) in Tashkent, with the participation of Afghanistan (first half-year period);

IV. In the Area of the Human Dimension.

- Completion of approval and signing of the Agreement between the Government of Uzbekistan and Government of United States of American on Science and Technology (first quarter);
- Organization of a meeting between experts of both countries on issues of expanding the contacts between U.S. and Uzbekistan scientific organizations and attracting grants to development of

scientific researches in priority directions of modern science and technology (first quarter);

- Implementation of joint academic and educational programs (first quarter);

- Identification of a higher educational institution (University) in the USA that would open its branch in Uzbekistan (second half-year period);

- Creation of scientific and cultural contacts between appropriate bodies in the U.S. and Uzbekistan for the wider familiarization of American society with rich historical and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan (first quarter);

- Providing assistance to strengthen the material-technical base of Uzbek organizations dealing with issues of historical and cultural heritage preservation by attracting financing from the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation and other American funds (second half-year period);

- Development of cooperation in the area of healthcare under USAID programs (first quarter);

- Organization of trainings for employees of Uzbek law-enforcement agencies on methods and tactics used in fighting against human trafficking, learning preventative measures and assisting the victims of human trafficking, as well as providing the rights and interest of defendants during investigations of such criminal cases (third quarter);

- Hosting roundtables and seminars on improvement of national legislation related to habeas corpus, rights of defendants and court procedures (third quarter);

- Organization of orientation trips for Uzbek media representatives to the U.S. to exchange experiences (first quarter).

V. In the Area of Providing Peace and Stability in Afghanistan

- Organization of the visit to Uzbekistan for R. Holbrook, U.S. Special Envoy on Afghanistan and Pakistan (February);

- Conducting jointly with Atlantic Council a special event, dedicated to the implementation of Uzbek initiative in the area of regional security, creation of a 6+3Contact Group on Afghanistan under the aegis of the U.N. (second half-year period);

- Exchange of information about the threats and measures to prevent them, related to the transit of non-military cargo via the Northern Distribution Network to Afghanistan, including within the framework

TASHKENT 00000019 005.2 OF 005

of Khayratan-Mazari-Sharif railroad construction project implementation (first quarter);

- Expansion of U.S. local procurements of goods for supplying to the IRoA through the Northern Distribution Network (first quarter).

End Text Diplomatic Note
NORLAND